

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

BY

CESAR IVAN ALVAREZ

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS


IN

SCULPTURE

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SUMMER 2007



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
University of Alberta Library

<https://archive.org/details/Alvarez2007>

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Final Visual Presentation

Submitted by Cesar Ivan Alvarez in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: CESAR IVAN ALVAREZ


TITLE OF THESIS: FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS GRANTED: MASTER OF FINE ARTS

YEAR THIS DEGREE WAS GRANTED: 2007

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis, and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly, or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.



ARTIST STATEMENT

CESAR I. ALVAREZ

My work is about the exploration, investigation and development, and reduction or refinement of form. With the influence of inspiration each of these aspects has a definitive function and leads to each other. Exploration with inspiration is the initial mental development of a piece. Investigation is further refinement of the inspirational evolution and differentiates from the exploration by the involvement and handling of materials. Inspiration does not cease to work at this point or at any other, but it work in unison. Finally reduction or refinement is when a piece is subjected to critical scrutiny where elements of sculptural and formal artistic issues are brought to bear on the form created. Here again neither inspiration nor investigation are neglected to the benefit of refinement, but to their complement and accord. Most of my inspiration comes from personal experiences materialized into form. Throughout the process of creating a sculpture there is internal and cerebral work that guides my course of action to see how my objectivity is affected by the process.

I recognize with gratitude the pioneer efforts of artists that have paved the way for me to express myself as a sculptor. First and most Anthony Caro, Michael Steiner, David Smith, Pablo Picasso, Julio Gonzalez, and Michael Angelo. The inspiration for my work comes from many sources. I do not ignore the possibility of inspiration brought by almost any work of art by any artist, but none specifically. What I mean by this is that I don't subscribe to have one or more artists to follow as my course of action; however, I do use parts of the whole of their work as inspiration. This inspiration does not mean that

I will copy their work or make mine like theirs. Quite the contrary, much of their work has inspired me to do something totally different; with the exception of “**After Anthony Caro, 2005.**” Anthony Caro was a great source of inspiration during a large part of my sculpture studies.

For the most part inspiration comes to me as images or forms that develop in my mind, like silhouettes that I retain and mentally develop further until I can see them in my imagination as a sculpture. Sometimes they present themselves as an overwhelming object which grows to a large scale sculpture, and at other times it is more related to human proportions, which in turn ends as such. I do see that many of these forms that come to my mind are the result of events affecting my life at that particular time, so my sculptures in many ways represent my state of mind, which one can say is not always what one shows. I can seem very calm while living with a struggle. On occasions my inspiration has come as dreams and then I work to find a form that in some way would represent that dream. I could create a sculpture that would exactly represent the inspiration I have received; however, there is an element of privacy and uniqueness that I want to preserve, thus abstract sculpture. What I require of this process is to find means to express freely what’s in my mind and to follow form that represent nature or man made objects are intellectually constrictive to me. In the sense that to copy directly from nature or man-made objects requires very little thinking. However, with abstract sculpture I’m free to substitute my thought and emotions into sculpture while maintaining their privacy or enshrinement. My inspiration has been on occasions of a more immediate nature, coming from materials. Materials that I have in my studio or that which I have found. This is no less important to me because it helps develop within me

the skill to recognize the possibilities of art in anything I see.

Once the initial idea has congealed in my mind it's time to put together materials. This is the investigation and development of the form and what elements will be needed to be incorporated, eliminated and/or changed in the mental and physical process of making a sculpture. I do not make drawings of my ideas because the drawings tend to work as blue prints which constrain the freedom to make changes as needed. Though to me this generally is not a haphazard affair, I deliberately plan a way of executing my work. As this planning takes place in my head, further details are developed or rejected and I visualize how the sculpture will look as I work out parts of the whole, keeping in mind that changes may be possible or required. Many times the effect of weight, height, strength, balance, angles, curves, protrusion, etc., can not be determined until the piece is assembled. I work fast and efficiently thanks to the planning I do ahead of time. I carve or cut and prepare the pieces of the sculpture before assembling. I generally do not rely on ready-made pieces, unless the material fits my desires for the piece. This does not rule out that at times I do put together sculptures by assembling or stacking ready made materials. In these cases very little or no planning takes place with the exception of a general idea of what I want to accomplish. Sculpture made of found objects, to me, has an element of chance that I'm not comfortable with. What I mean by the chance element is that I would lose valuable time searching and I may not find what I would be looking for. As much as I enjoy the physicality of the work, I do enjoy contemplating on a plane or a vast area of sheet of steel, or the texture of an area of a piece full of different elements, and the effect of light and shadows on the piece. I enjoy immensely the

opportunity that sculpture gives me to choose whatever path I wish and use my personal language of art. Throughout this process I keep on looking at what is happening within me and how are my emotions affecting what I do with the sculpture. I question is my stress, my sadness, my happiness, my indifference affecting the outcome of my piece? Do I need to let my emotions play a bigger role or should they be ignored? Since these sculptures are my expressions, these issues are important. I have worked with wood for a very long time of my life and I have accomplished a very high skill in doing so, thus I fear that if my pieces were made out of wood they would lack passion. However, my experience with steel is very limited, so the prospects of learning to handle, what to me is a new material, is exciting and challenging and I do love a challenge.

During the process of coming up with an idea and developing it into a sculpture, there is a tendency to put too much into it, and the work is primarily subjective and intuitive, artistic rules are ignored and the main task is to build-up something. Thanks to feedback from Peter Hide it is becoming easier, to look at a piece with a critical eye. What I mean by a critical eye is can I see a composition, a visual balance, an interesting outline? Does the piece hold and maintain a relationship with the viewer; does it invite the viewer to look around? Does it hold its own as a work of art? Has the piece become representative and is there an expression, even though pains were taken to hide the meaning and content and allow the piece to be judged on its own? These and many other questions come to mind and here again inspiration plays a role; what to take out, what to keep and what to add? At this point one can see a duality that I feel is characteristic of abstract sculpture. To separate the emotion and feelings that were necessary to start

working from the material reality and to accomplish the all so important goal of producing a work of art, truly speaking, this is the time to ignore sentiments and passions and look at sculpture as the object that it is. By this time I have worked out the emotional promptings and forgot them. This also is the time when the sculpture loses its precious status and taking a detached attitude is the best. At first with a new sculpture put together there is a strong enthusiasm and a reluctance to do a reduction or refinement, however with other similar sculptures this process is less stressful and there is a willingness to do reduction freely. In my view abstract art offers a conflict that once resolved allows the artist a rare opportunity to create a relationship between the artist and those who view the art. The conflict lies on the initial motivation for the piece of art and how the viewer perceives the work which generally does not coincide, but if the piece is judged by its form alone the conflict is nullified. My sculptures do not offer a domestic, industrial or decorative function, but they do offer an intellectual, emotional, visual and tactile function to those who wish to explore them.

ARTIST STATEMENT

CHASING FORM

*The sculptures you see here are the result of work and study for a period of two and half years in the MFA graduate program. The main drive or purpose for this work was, with the help of inspiration, **the exploration, investigation and development, and reduction or refinement of form.** Exploration was the initial mental development of a piece. Investigation was further refinement of the inspirational evolution and differentiates from the exploration through the involvement and handling of materials. Reduction or refinement occurred when a piece was subjected to critical scrutiny where elements of sculptural and formal artistic issues were brought to bear on the form created.*

The inspiration for these works came from many sources. The possibilities for inspiration could be found in almost any work of art, but none specifically, and it could have been anything. Some work was the result of doing the opposite of the inspirational source. And other works were inspired by personal experiences. The image created in the mind was further developed until it could be seen as a sculpture in the mind.

Once the idea was congealed, in the mind it was time to put together materials. This was the investigation and development of the form. As the work progressed, changes were made as needed to satisfy the artistic point of view, such as visual balance, proportions, effects of weight and height, angles, protrusions, and so on; things that could not

be determined until the piece was assembled. Most of this work was cut, carved and prepared before it was assembled.

For the reduction and refinement of the form to take place the pieces needed to be looked at with a critical eye. What does critical eye means? As an artist there are questions one has to ask, such as; are there compositions, visual balance, and interesting outlines? Do the pieces have and maintain a relationship with the viewer; do they invite the viewer to look around? Do they hold their own as works of art? Have the pieces become representative, and are there expressions? Even though efforts were taken to hide the meanings and contents, to allow the pieces to be judge on their own. At the completion of the work, there is a separation of the emotions and feelings that were necessary to start working, from the material reality and to accomplish the all so important goal of producing a work of art.

Why abstract sculpture? It is a greater challenge to create a non representational work of art where there are no visual limits of known objects. Abstract sculpture has a multiplicity of aspects that allows the artist to express him/herself without being judge on what thoughts are in the mind. From silly thoughts can grow great things. The work need not be judged by the thought, but rather by what it is. A further duplicity occurs when the work is viewed by others where the viewer is free to participate with a different state of mind and is able to see different meanings.

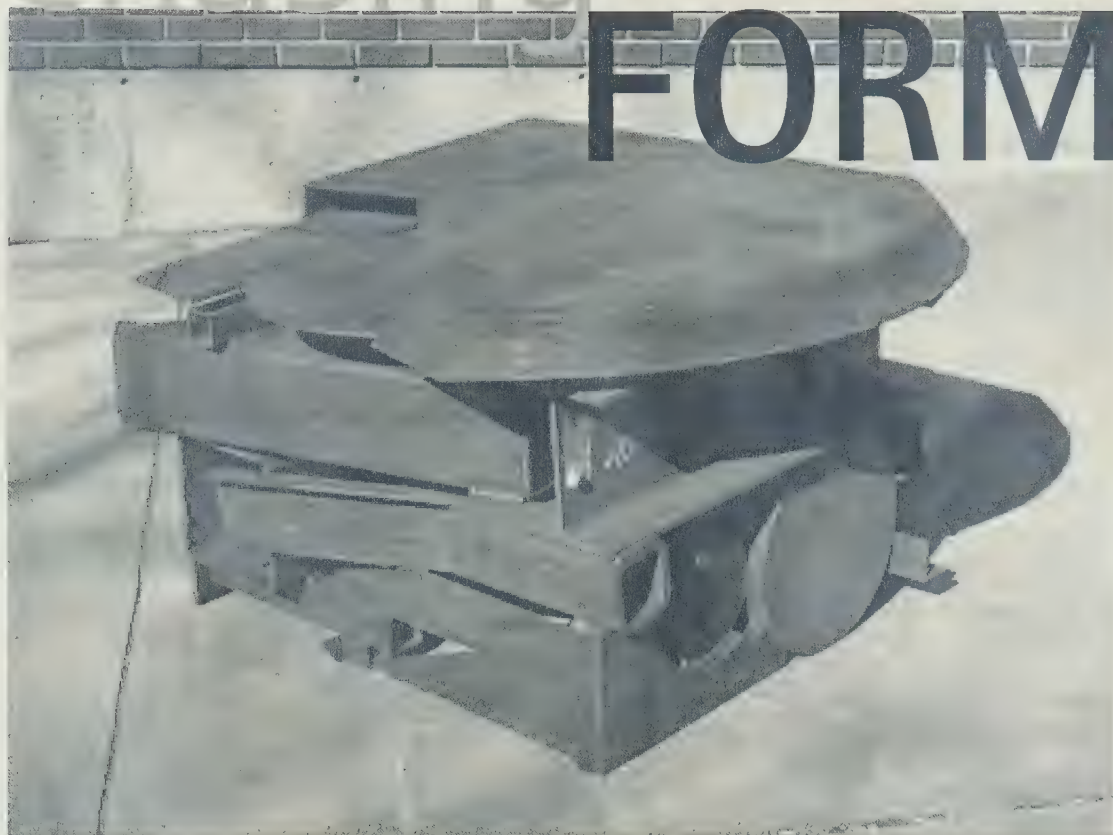
Cesar I. Alvarez

Cesar Alvarez

MFA Sculpture

chasing

FORM



This exhibition is the final presentation for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in **Sculpture**

■ **Opening Reception** (outdoors)

Thursday, 21 June 6:00 – 9:00 pm

■ **Exhibition Location** (outdoors)

University of Alberta Campus
South of Rutherford Library
& West of the LRT Station
at 89 Avenue and 112 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

18 June – 2 July, 2007

| [SEARCH BLOG](#) | [FLAG BLOG](#) | [Next Blog](#)

[Create Blog](#) | [Sign In](#)

Prairie Artsters

Writing, reviewing, and documenting art on the prairies

Galleries and Spaces

Agnes Bugera Gallery
 Alberta Craft Council
 Art Gallery of Alberta
 ArtsHab
 Bearclaw Gallery
 Douglas Udell Gallery
 Electrum Design Studio
 FAB Gallery
 Fringe Gallery
 Front Gallery
 Harcourt House
 La Société francophone du
 Centre d'arts visuels de
 l'Alberta
 Latitude 53
 Nina Haggerty Centre for the
 Arts
 Peter Robertson Gallery
 Portal Art Gallery
 Profiles Public Art Gallery
 Scott Gallery
 SNAP
 Tu Gallery
 Visual Arts Alberta
 Association Gallery
 West End Gallery

Showing posts for query **cesar alvarez**. [Show all posts](#)

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2007

Cesar Alvarez and Peter Hide

It is a pleasant coincidence that in the same week MFA sculptor student Cesar Alvarez and local sculptor legend Peter Hide both open their shows at FAB (outside sculpture garden) and Scott Gallery, respectively.

Alvarez, whose work on first impressions alone, echos the lineage of Hide, Anthony Caro, and David Smith. Although even within this lineage there is already fractions and tangents in style and theory, Alvarez appears to take up where Hide left off and returns to the simplicity of the 'abstract' form. The shapes, the forms, seemingly present a sense of being, an ontological presence that balances the urge and the resistance to shape an existing form.

Clearly the skill level differs; there is no question that Hide is the senior weilding his scraps and pieces into a form wholly of his own creation. Also, Hide's current pieces were on the smaller scale, and therefore changes their overall density and impact; but looking at both's approach to metal, where one is just beginning and the other just entering his golden years, one can only wonder how each relates to their respective craft.

This is not just 3D sketching as some believe modernist sculptures to be, and to the passerby, the large forms standing on Edmonton's street corners, parks, and LRT station platforms can appear indistinguishable from one to the next. But looking closer, sandwiched between the impressions left by encountering Alvarez and Hide, there seems to always be a power over the object; and it is this overall presentation of this domination, this ever-present presence, that makes them at odds with the fleeting transience of forgettable public encounters.

Posted by Amy Fung at 6/24/2007 06:51:00 PM 2 comments [Links to this post](#)

Blog Archive

▼ 2007 (43)

▼ August (7)

The Crash Pad,
 Latitude 53, August
 10 - September ...
 Roots, Profiles Public
 Art Gallery, August
 2 - Sep...
 The Portable Festival
 of Portable Art,
 Institute P...
 Anthony Easton "The
 Farm Show",
 Remedy Cafe
 Sweet: Candy at the
 Sugarbowl, Super
 Photo Friends...

[Newer Posts](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Posts](#)

Subscribe to: [Posts \(Atom\)](#)

Capital Modern:

Edmonton

Architecture and

Urban De...

Michelle Lavoie 'In the

Gatherine Light'

and Maril...

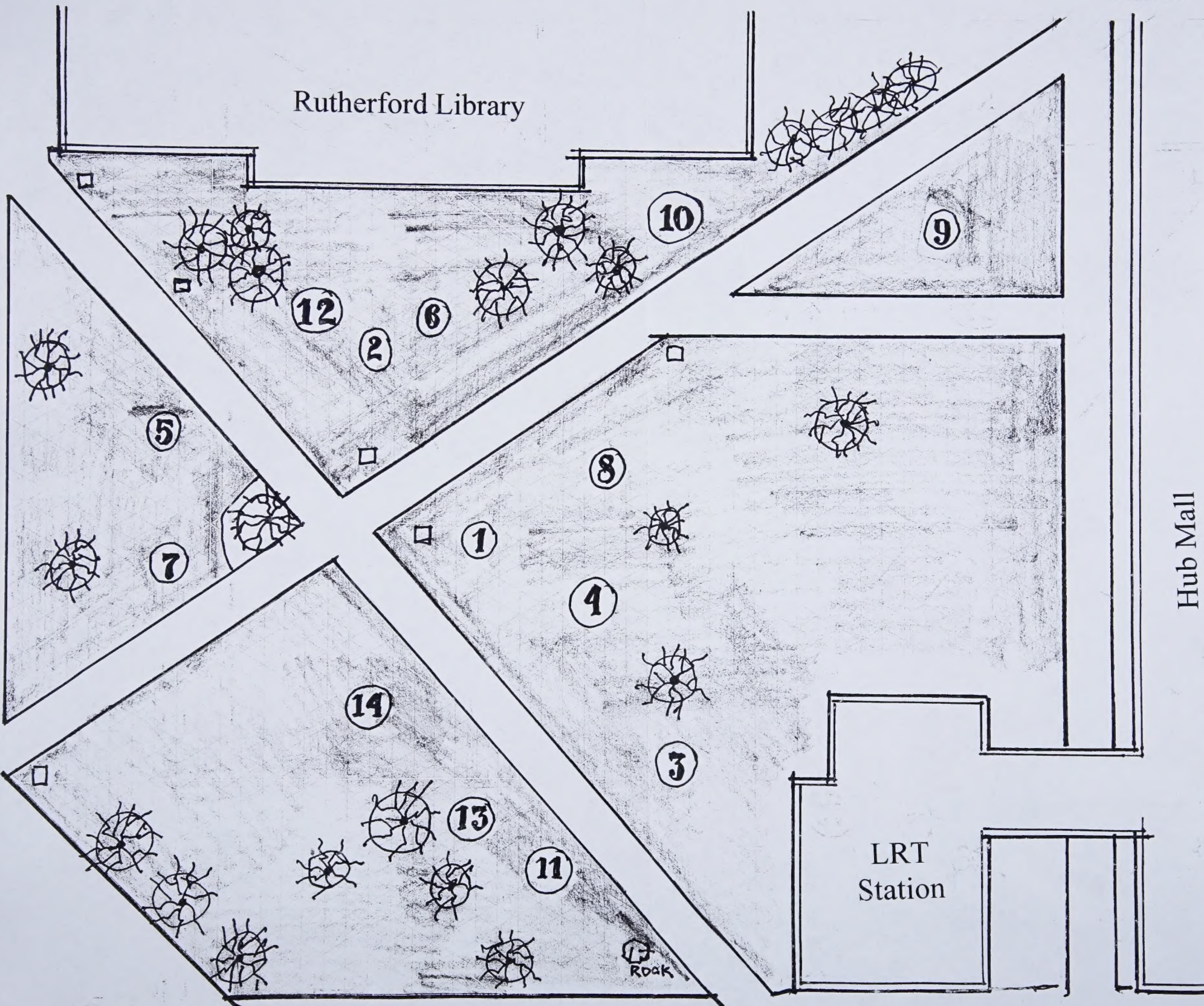
*For news or to subscribe, please send an e-mail to amyfung@fastmail.fm
with subject line "prairie artsters" **1 4 2 4** visitors since June 14, 2007*





► July (10)

► June (11)

► May (9)

► April (6)



-  Tree
-  Lamp/sign Post
-  Grass Area
-  sculpture

Not to scale
All location are approx.

